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E-books in academic libraries: an international overview

Tedd, Lucy A.

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Ebooks in academic libraries – an international overview

Author

Lucy A. Tedd

Lecturer

Department of Information Studies

University of Wales Aberystwyth

Aberystwyth SY 23 1EW

Wales UK

E-mail: lat@aber.ac.uk

Ebooks in academic libraries – an international overview

Abstract

This paper provides a broad and general international overview of ebooks in academic libraries. The inconsistent terminology relating to ebooks is noted in the first section and a brief history of ebooks and some current definitions are given. The stakeholders within the ebook industry are described with details of some of the services offered. For users and staff in library and information services ebooks can provide a variety of advantages as well as challenges and these are outlined for those in academic libraries. Findings from various studies on ebooks are given and some of the issues involved in managing ebooks in academic libraries are described. Finally an overview is presented of the eBooks Working Group in the UK. The paper is illustrated with a number of screenshots related to ebooks in academic libraries in various parts of the world.

INTRODUCTION

The development of electronic versions of printed books (or ebooks) can be seen as part of the whole e-publishing phenomenon that began in the 1960s. According to Ardito (2000) the phrase ‘electronic book’ was coined by van Dam at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island during the 1960s when working on early hypertext systems. In 1971 work started on a project to generate ebooks for printed works that were out of any copyright law restrictions within the US. Project Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org>) now provides free access to about 16,000 ebooks. More recently, Project Gutenberg of Australia (<http://gutenberg.net.au>) has been developed to provide access to ebooks which are in the public domain in Australia or are of specific Australian interest. In the UK the Oxford Text Archive

was founded in 1976 to provide electronic texts for the research and teaching needs of the scholarly community (<http://ota.ahds.ac.uk/>).

During the 1980s and 1990s there were many examples of multimedia ‘objects’, especially dictionaries and encyclopaedias, being published on CD-ROM which were then read on the personal computers of the day. By the end of the 1990s there were also many instances of ebooks being available for use with Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) as well as manufacturers who were developing specific hand-held devices that could be used to display text in the form of a book. One definition of an ebook of that time, quoted by TechWeb, a business technology network, was: *Electronic books are handheld computerised devices with high-resolution screens, backlighting, and extended-life batteries intended to serve as storage devices for literary works or things like technical manuals that can be digitally distributed easily over the Internet.*

(<http://www.techweb.com/wire/story/TWB19990219S0025>). That same website notes a claim from a manufacturer that 10,000 of the then recently developed Rocket Ebook readers would be sold within six months. By 2003 production of this device had stopped. Unfortunately there was little standardisation of the ebook readers from various manufacturers and users were not happy with the technology. Lynch, Executive Director of the Coalition for Networked Information in the US, stated in 2001 “*imprecise and inconsistent terminology has been a major source of confusion in the hype over e-books, and an obstacle to disentangling the issues involved.*” (Lynch, 2001). Lynch carries on to describe how it is necessary to distinguish between the digital book, or ebook, and the physical appliance used for reading the ebook. The definition of an ebook provided by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) includes both : *a hand-held electronic device on which the text of a book can be read. Also: a book whose text is available in an electronic format for reading on such a device or on a computer screen; (occas.) a book whose text is available only or primarily on the Internet.* The definition provided by Armstrong, Edwards and Lonsdale is one accepted by many: *any piece of electronic text regardless of size or composition (a digital object), but excluding journal publications, made available electronically (or optically) for any device (handheld or desk-bound) that includes a screen* (Armstrong, Edwards and Lonsdale, 2002). The definition of an ebook given by the online encyclopaedia, Wikipedia, reflects the problem identified by Lynch:

An ebook is an electronic (or digital) version of a book. The term is used ambiguously to refer to either an individual work in a digital format, or a hardware device used to read books in digital format. Some users deprecate the second meaning in favour of the more precise "ebook device". (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebook>). Other definitions, such as that quote by Appleton (2004) refer to an ebook as representing: *content that has been made available digitally via an Internet connection and displayed on a computer screen and allowing pages to be printed and downloaded locally.*

Some ebooks are digitised versions of printed books (with extra functionality regarding linking and searching features) whereas as other ebooks, as indicated in the OED definition are ‘born digital’. Many publishers, as described later, are now involved in the production of ebooks and these are considered important digital information sources in academic libraries. Ebooks are often listed, alongside other sources (such as ejournals, OPACs and bibliographic databases) in many academic libraries as can be seen in Figure 1, from the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, as well as in Figure 2, from the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa, which shows the specific ebook collections held within its electronic resource collection.

Figure 1 Digital information sources available from the University of Wales
Aberystwyth

Aberystwyth The University of Wales Gwasanaethau Gwybodaeth Information Services

Search: All Information Services Web

ElecInfo

Welcome to ElecInfo, your gateway to electronic information sources for UWA

[Login here to use any Athens UWA resources](#)

A-Z of Electronic Information Sources

- Browse a list of major sources
- Athens and other Passwords
- Voyager - UWA Library Catalogue
- National Library of Wales & other Catalogues
- OCLC FirstSearch
- Web of Knowledge
- IBSS via OVID
- Latest electronic information News
- Electronic Resources Trials
- Help, Feedback and Online Guides

- JoEy - Electronic Journals
- Open Access ejournals
- Data and Media Resources Online
- Subject information and links
- Virtual Reference Collection
- Blackboard
- Ebooks
- EndNote
- Link Resolver

Athens and other Passwords

Athens:

[Login here to use any Athens UWA resources](#)

We now use the AthensDA system to authenticate UWA members' access to Athens-authenticated electronic information resources and ejournals: AthensDA. This allows you to use your normal UWA Unix/email username and password to get access to these resources. You will then not need a separate Athens password.

Figure 2. eBook collections at the University of Witwatersrand

Quick Links Library Home Wits Home Page Exam Papers Online Reference Desk Site Map Campus Libraries List

UWL
University of the Witwatersrand Library

e-WITS CATALOGUE SERVICES ELECTRONIC RESOURCES ABOUT US

- Title List
- Subject List
- E Books
- Citing Electronic Resources
- Trial Resources
- E Journal Portal
- ETD
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Setting up access to CD-ROMs

:: E BOOKS

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

African Digital Library	The ADL has a collection of over 8000 electronic books
African Studies Companion Online	The African Studies Companion seeks to bring together a wide range of sources of information in the African studies field
Google Print	Google Print aims to put book content where you can find it most easily - Online (Site is in Beta testing, click here for more info...)
Internet Sacred Text Archive	This site is a freely available archive of electronic texts about religion, mythology, legends and folklore, and occult and esoteric topics.
Knovel Chemistry Reference Resources	Knovel brings essential Sci-tech reference data to life in a virtual technical library that solves problems for engineers, applied scientists and librarians worldwide.
Online Books Page	A website that facilitates access to books that are freely readable over the Internet.

TOP

UWL Web Admin Updated 13 September 2005

One of the ebook collections listed in Figure 2 is that of Google Print. In late 2004 a project was launched which will involve Google in the digitisation of millions of books from the major research libraries of Harvard University, the University of Michigan, New York Public Library and Stanford University in the US as well as the Bodleian Library in Oxford (<http://print.google.com/googleprint/about.html>). Carr, Bodley's Librarian at the University of Oxford, in a press release describing the project, stated: *Because of copyright restrictions and intellectual property issues, the agreement between Google and Oxford covers only 'public domain' materials (i.e. printed books for which the copyright has expired - principally, books published before 1920), and it will involve the establishment in Oxford, by Google, of a digital scanning and processing unit which, when fully operational, should be capable of producing as many as 10,000 electronic books per week. The scanning operation will lead to the creation of two digital copies of each book: one for Google, and one for Oxford. The Google copy will be fully indexed and searchable through the Google search service, while the Oxford copy will be linked directly to the relevant catalogue record in the Oxford Libraries Information Service (OLIS).*" (Carr, 2004).

The Bodleian's involvement in the Google Print project is seen as satisfying the aims of the founder of the library, Sir Thomas Bodley, who, some 400 years ago, hoped that the library at Oxford would be for all, and not just those scholars attached to the university. With so many ebooks available this project will also satisfy the aims of the Oxford University Library Service in developing a digital library based on the content of its incomparable physical collections.

Interest in, and use of, ebooks has increased in during 2004/5. For instance there have been a number of courses and workshops on ebooks held that have attracted much attention and discussion including:

- four workshops on developing and managing ebook collections in 2005 run by the UK eInformation Group (UKEiG)
(<http://www.ukieg.org.uk/content/public/activities/meetings/14sep05ebk.html>)
- a workshop on evaluating ebooks before the 2005 Library and Information Association of South Africa Conference and a workshop on managing ebook collections after the conference
(http://www.liasa.org.za/conferences/conference2005/LIASA_2005_E-books-Programmes.pdf)
- a workshop on ebooks as part of the European Library Automation Group's annual seminar held at CERN, Geneva in 2005
(<http://elag2005.web.cern.ch/elag2005/media/workshop4.pdf>)
- a workshop on ebooks funded by Unesco and held in Bangalore, India in 2004
(<http://www.vidyanidhi.org.in/ebook/html/menu.html>).

Commercial publishers are now making ebooks available, at a one-off price or for use via a special licence and, as with ejournals, are sometime providing 'bundles' of ebook titles. These ebooks are being acquired by many academic libraries, sometimes, through various 'deals', such as those in the UK made between the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) and ebook providers. At an international level, the International Digital Publishing Forum, formerly known as the Open eBook Forum, is a trade and standards organisation for ebook publishers which aims to:

- provide a forum for the discussion of issues and technologies related to ebooks.

- develop, publish and maintain common specifications relating to ebooks and promote the successful adoption of these specifications.
- promote industry-wide participation of electronic publishing through training sessions, guidelines, and demonstrations of proven technology.
- identify, evaluate and recommend standards created by other bodies related to ebooks.
- encourage interoperable implementations of ebook-related systems and provide a forum for resolution of interoperability issues.
- accommodate differences in language, culture, reading and learning styles, and individual abilities (<http://www.idpf.org/about.htm>).

The accepted view by many is that ebooks are set to become standard resources in academic libraries where students and researchers the world over are becoming used to, and indeed expect to find, digital information sources to support their studies and be part of their virtual learning environment (VLE).

TYPES OF EBOOK

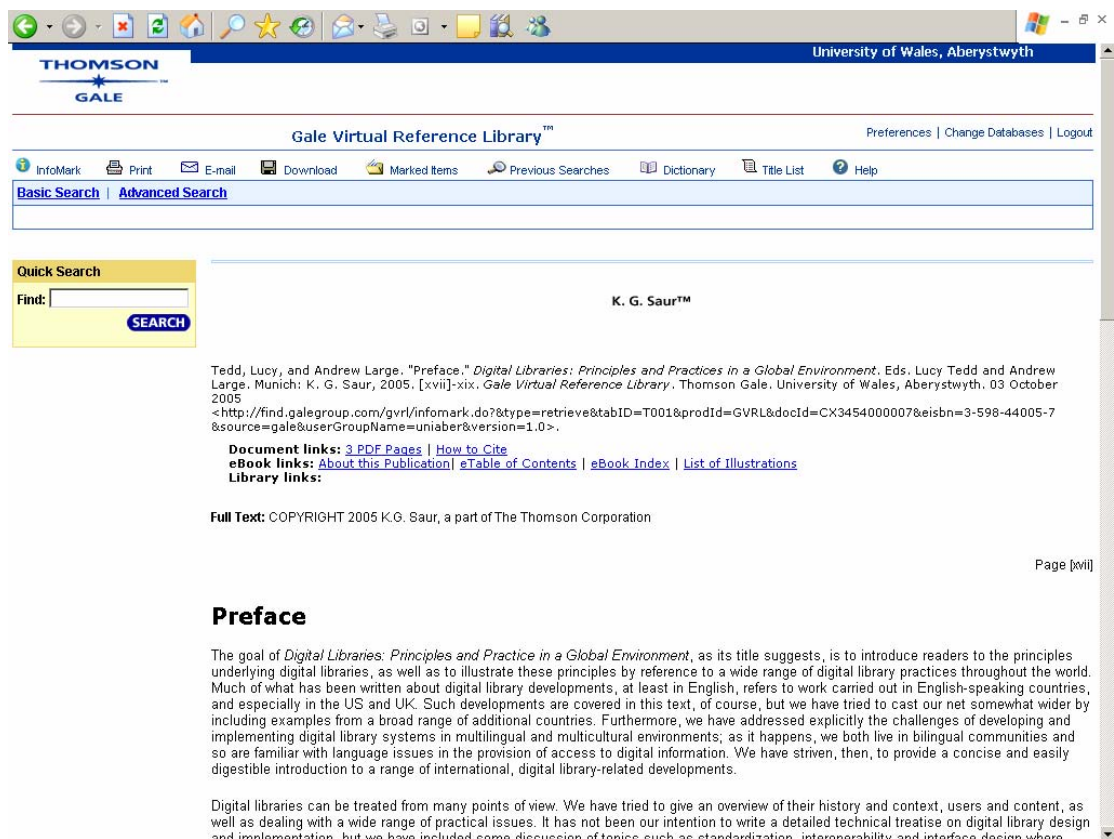
As with a printed book (sometimes referred to as a pbook) there is a great variety of type of content that can be published in ebook format as can be seen in a browse through the ebook and e-doc collection on Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com>).

However, in academic libraries the general types of ebook likely to be acquired include:

- Textbooks – containing text with embedded links etc. Many publishers are now making their printed text books available as ebooks. For instance the book *Digital Libraries: principles and practice in a global environment* was

written by the authors as a conventional pbook and published by K.G. Saur (Tedd and Large, 2005). Saur is part of the Thomson Corporation and this textbook has been made available as an ebook on Gale's Virtual Reference Library – also part of the Thomson Corporation. Part of the preface of this is shown as an ebook in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Part of an ebook in the Gale Virtual Reference Library

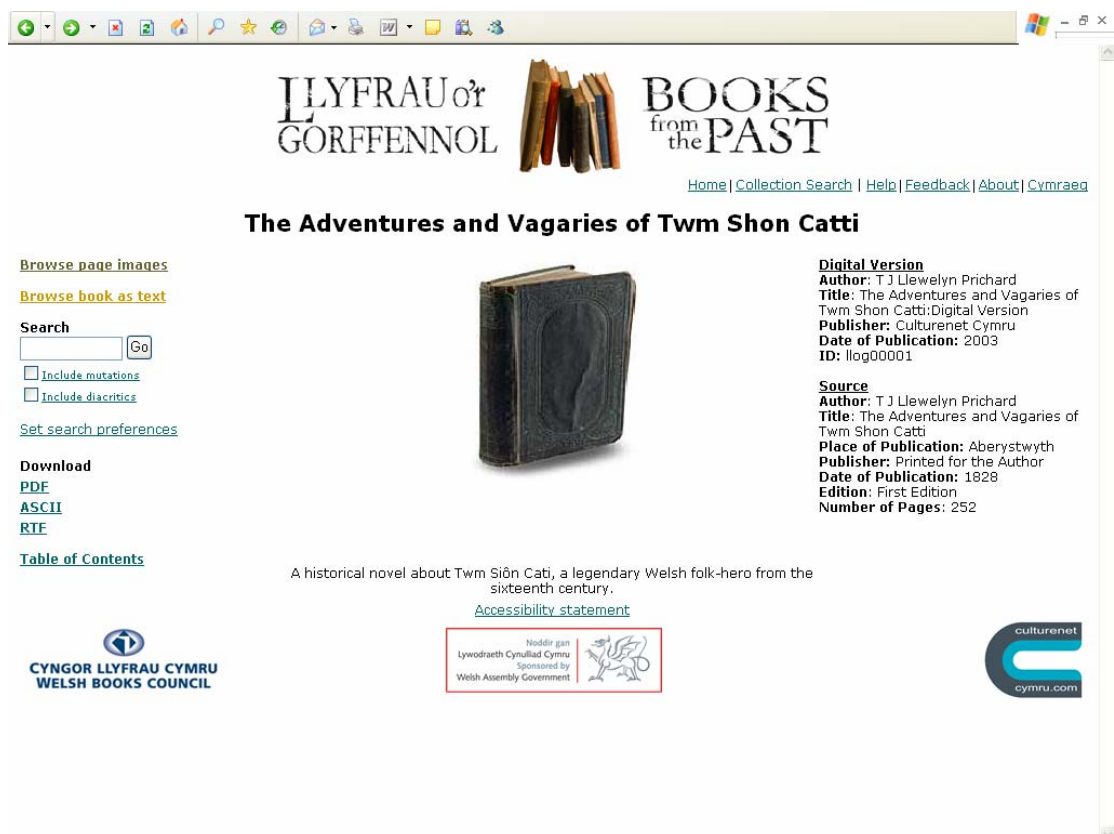


Multimedia books that might contain sound and images that could be useful for students in engineering and medicine and so on. Such books are usually 'born digital' specifically for the ebook market.

- Reference books (dictionaries, encyclopaedias and so on) such as those available from Oxford Reference Online.
- Directories etc. that need frequent updating

- Digitised versions of ‘out of print’ books. In Wales a project known as Books from the Past is underway to make ‘out of print’ pbooks in both the Welsh and English language available as ebooks (Haarhoff, 2005). In this project (<http://www.booksfromthepast.org>) users are able to carry out a full-text search (in both Welsh and English) across the whole collection and within a specific book as well as being able to view images of each page to see the orthography and layout of the original. Figure 4 shows the screen of browse and search options for one of the ebooks within this collection.

Figure 4. Browse and search options within Books from the Past



STAKEHOLDERS IN EBOOKS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Users

Users might include the teaching staff, researchers and students within the academic institution. There are many advantages for users of ebooks over pbooks including:

- Available 24/7 from 'local' desktop/laptop i.e. no need to visit the library.
This can be particularly useful for distance-learning students, such as those for whom the text in Figure 3 is core reading material.
- More than one person may be able to access the same ebook at the same time (although not all ebook suppliers allow this in the licensing agreements).
- Searchable and usually special navigation features. The software that accompanies any ebook will provide facilities for searching and navigating the content that are usually much superior to the table of contents and back of the book index available with pbooks.
- Ebooks have the potential to be of use for those with physical disabilities, for whom accessing the library building may be a challenge, or for those with visual disabilities as screen-reading/text enlarging software can be used with the digital text.

However, there may also be some challenges for users in using ebooks:

- There will be a need for some special equipment – be it a desktop PC, laptop or hand-held device as well as a working Internet connection.
- Although there will be software to read and browse the ebook, for some users this may not seem to be designed in a user-friendly manner.
- If an academic library makes ebooks available from a variety of suppliers there is likely to be a lack of standardisation of interfaces – and this can be confusing for users.
- Many students, when preparing essays, like to have several pbooks accessible on their desk at any one time. With ebooks it may be difficult to replicate the

same effect in the digital environment as it may be difficult to access several ebooks at the same time.

- Although the numbers of ebooks is growing their number is still limited and many are in English, with, to some, too much of a US-bias.

Library and information service (LIS) staff

In an academic setting, often the professional staff in the library/information service/learning resource centre are a key stakeholder as they are the point of contact between the publishers and producers of ebooks and the needs of users within the academic institution. Increasingly library and information professionals are part of the 'subject teams' involved in developing VLEs as described by Secker (2005). The advantages for LIS staff who provide ebooks to users in their academic institutions include:

- possible saving of space for housing the physical pbook volumes.
- no lost or damaged titles.
- the ability to provide adjustable fonts, speech output and so on for visually impaired users enables library staff to comply with any legal disability discrimination requirements.
- the ease with which ebooks can be integrated into VLEs when developing support material for a specific taught module.
- the usual instant 'delivery' of an ordered ebook title and there are also possible cost savings in the whole acquisition process.
- the possibility for dynamic collection management if relevant statistics of use are produced.

However, there can also be many challenges for LIS staff in the provision of ebooks.

- The aggregators and publishers which make ebooks available have a variety of licensing models which control how users may access the ebooks. Typically, libraries acquire ebooks from a number of suppliers and so have to be aware of the different licensing models and also make sure that the users too are aware of these.
- The variation in user interfaces between the various ebook suppliers means that library and information staff need to produce relevant digital, or print, support documentation to assist their users in accessing the ebooks.
- There is a need to ‘integrate’ ebooks properly with other items and so metadata, often in the form of MARC records, needs to be available, say for inclusion in a library’s catalogue. Figure 5 shows an entry in the catalogue at Queen’s University Belfast for the ebook and pbook available when searching for the title *Advanced thermodynamics for engineers*.

Figure 5. Results from a title search of Queen’s University Belfast showing the availability of the ebook and the pbook

Queen's University Belfast

Search Queen's Multi Search My Account Inter Loan Request Library Home Help

QCat library catalogue

You searched for:

Keyword:

Author:

Title:

Sub-catalogue:

Library Branch:

[Search Again](#) [New Search](#) [Hide search](#)

There are 2 titles matching your search.

Number 2 of 2 [previous](#) [Reserve](#) [Other titles by Author\(s\)](#)

Author Winterbone, D. E.
Title Advanced thermodynamics for engineers / Desmond E. Winterbone
Published London ; New York : Wiley : Arnold, 1997
Collation xix, 378p, 25cm
Control Number 034067699x
Subject Thermodynamics
 TJ265 [See other titles for this subject](#)

[Show loan statistics](#)

Location	Shelfmark	Loan Type	Availability	Copies	Loans	
Network	Electronic version / QConnect	Reference	Not on loan	1	0	Barcode
Science	TJ265AWINT	Normal	Not on loan	1	0	Barcode

[Brief display list](#)

There are 2 titles matching your search.

Number 2 of 2 [prev](#) [Previous Page](#)

- As with any digital source, there needs to be a programme of promotion. One of the conclusions of the work carried out for the JISC in the UK on the use made of electronic information services (EIS) in higher education was that students will, in the main, only use EIS that they have been told to use by their lecturers (Urquhart et al., 2003). Therefore LIS staff need to work closely with their academic colleagues to ensure that they know about appropriate ebooks that might be available for use by students.
- LIS staff are constantly challenged to keep up with developments in various aspects of their professional life – keeping abreast of relevant developments in the ebook world is yet another challenge.

Publishers

Some publishers have become very involved in the production of ebooks, some a little involved and some are waiting to see how the marketplace will develop.

Goswami (2004), at the Unesco workshop in Bangalore, outlined the view of one publisher, Springer, which currently publishes some 1700 ebooks in the science, technology and medical field.

(<http://www.springeronline.com/sgw/cda/frontpage/0,11855,3-117-2-140679-0,00.html>). Other examples of publishers involved in ebook publishing include (and this is a very selective list):

- Oxford Reference Online from Oxford University Press (OUP) provides a core collection of some 130 language and subject reference works –
<http://www.oxfordreference.com>
- Oxford Scholarship Online, also from OUP, provides access to 980 books from this publisher in the subject areas of economics and finance, philosophy, political science and religion, with some 200+ to be added each year -
<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com>
- Taylor and Francis Online eBook Library provides access to 7,000 titles in a broad range of subjects - <http://www.tandfjisc.com/>. Within the UK the JISC has negotiated a deal where the annual licence fee for a 180-title ‘package’ from this collection costs from £990 - £2475 depending on the size of the academic institution.
- Wiley Interscience Online Books provides access to 1300 ebook titles in key science areas - <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/>.

Aggregators

Aggregators in the ebook market are companies which bring together the ebook content from different publishers and make it available, via specific hardware and

software, to others, such as libraries. Sathyanarayana (2004) outlined the role of aggregators at the Unesco workshop in Bangalore and concluded with the view that: *aggregators will emerge as new content partners of libraries with collaborative opportunities and competitive threats.*

Examples of aggregators used by academic libraries (and again this is a very selective list)

- Academic Library- which provides unlimited simultaneous access to about 350 ebook titles in social sciences and humanities.
<http://www.theacademiclibrary.com>
- Books@Ovid - this provider of a variety of ejournals and bibliographic databases in clinical medicine now has a core collection of 200 textbooks in clinical medicine in ebook format. There are also plans for ebooks in engineering, psychology and chemistry - <http://www.ovid.com>
- Early English Books Online is an ebook collection of about 125,000 titles published between 1473 and 1700 and has been made available through collaboration between the universities of Michigan, Oxford and ProQuest - <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>
- Ebrary provides access to some 60,000 ebook titles from over 200 academic, science, technology and medical and professional publishers - <http://www.ebrary.com>
- Gale Virtual Library is part of the Thomson Corporation and currently has about 300 ebook titles of books published by Thomson Corporation companies - <http://www.gale.com/gvrl/>
- netLibrary is probably the most well-known of ebook aggregators. It provides access to some 75,000 titles from a range of over 400 publishers. netLibrary is

currently used by some 12,000 libraries worldwide and is now owned by OCLC - <http://www.netlibrary.com>.

- Safari Tech Books Online are available to academic libraries from ProQuest.

The subject coverage is mainly in information technology and this aggregator provides access to several thousand ebooks from several publishers -

<http://proquest.safaribooksonline.com>

Authors

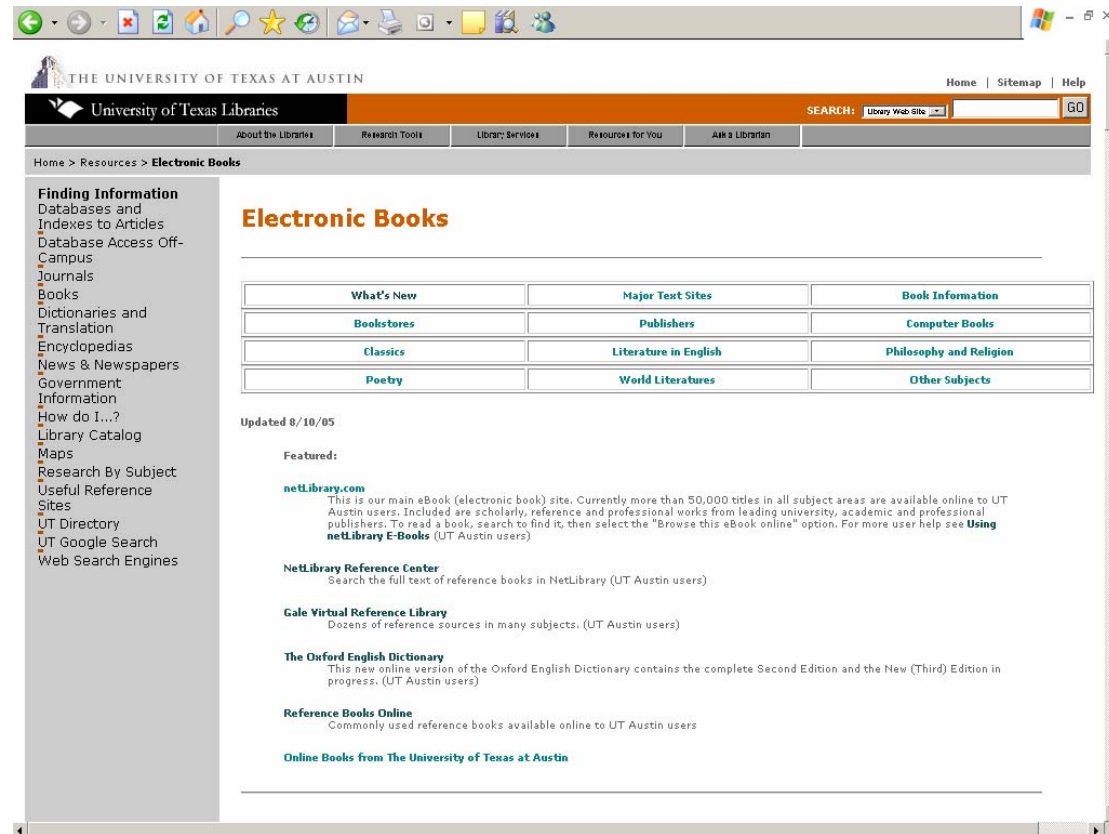
In the same way that the majority of ejournals that exist at present are based on their printed counterpart so too with ebooks, as the majority available are digitised versions of pbooks and are not born digital. Authors, therefore, need to use different techniques for developing born digital ebooks. An example of a born digital ebook is the one produced as part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council funded City Sites project at the universities of Birmingham and Nottingham (Balshaw et al, 2000). Authors are obviously responsible for the intellectual content of the ebook and, as with pbooks, determining who is the copyright holder how monies accrued from sales of ebooks are to be apportioned between author and publishers needs to be addressed.

REPORTS ON STUDIES OF EBOOKS

Various studies of the use of ebooks are beginning to appear in the LIS literature. For instance, Dillon, wrote a series of articles in *Library Hi Tech* on the experiences at the University of Texas in providing access to some 20,000 ebooks in 2000. One conclusion (Dillon, 2001) was that after adding MARC records for ebooks to the library's catalogue usage increased as well as the subject mix of ebooks being accessed. Some ebook suppliers, such as netLibrary, supply MARC records for the

ebooks acquired. Figure 6 shows some of the ebook suppliers used at the University of Texas Library in 2005.

Figure 6 Ebook suppliers at the University of Texas Library



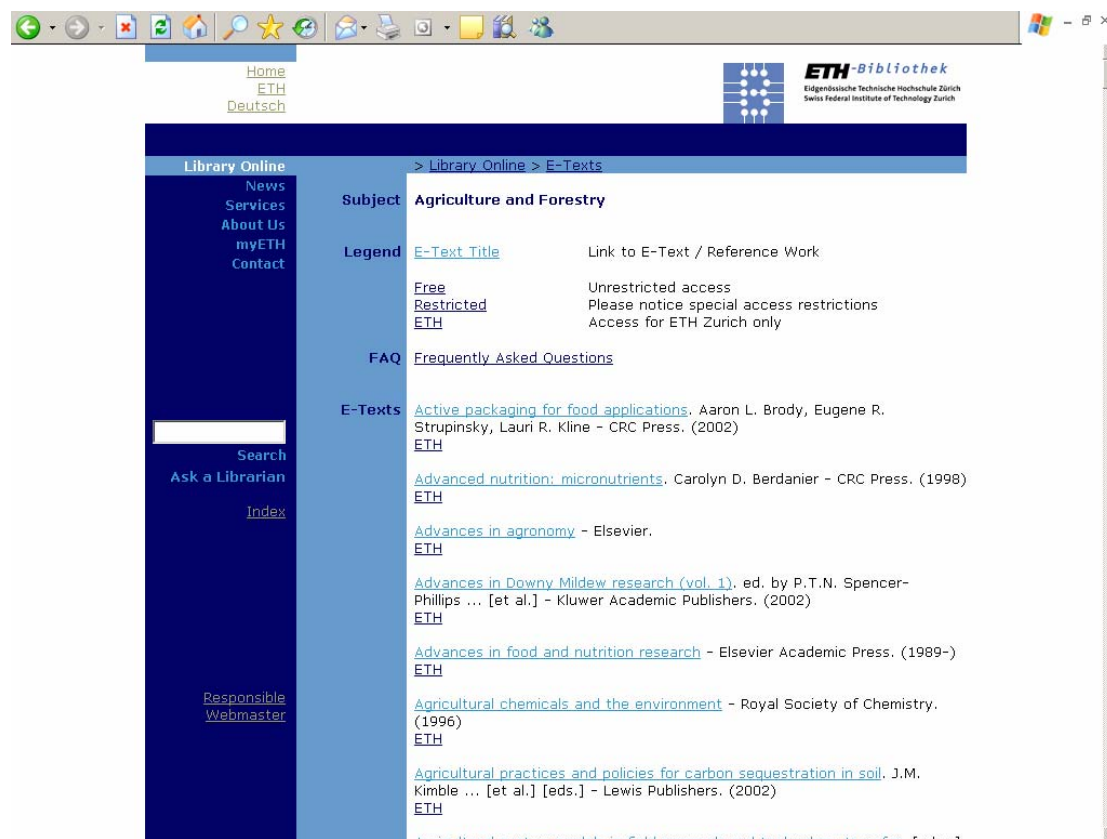
Also from the US, Snowhill (2001) reports on the work of the Ebook Task Force at the University of California's Digital Library. One conclusion reached was that: *the role of e-books in academic libraries is still not clear, there is considerable development of standards, technologies and pricing models needed to make the market for e-books viable and sustainable*. Issues surrounding licensing and economic models and problems associated with bibliographic access were also noted in the results of a survey in ebooks in academic libraries in the UK (Armstrong, Edwards and Lonsdale, 2002), although that study also reported that web-based ebooks predominate and a number of publishers in the UK market were beginning to address the need for ebook content for academic markets. At the University of Surrey, Green (2003) reports on experiences of using ebooks since 2001 and concludes that

after two years ebooks are already “*seen as just another information resources, sitting happily alongside printed books, online databases and ejournals*”. Cox, of the Library at the National University of Ireland in Galway, reports on the experiences, during 2002/3 of a group of Irish academic libraries in using ebooks from Safari Tech Books Online (Cox, 2004). The conclusion reached in that study was that: *The Irish e-books project has yielded encouraging results for academic libraries, at least in technology and business subjects. Where content matches need, e-books can support the academic mission effectively, saving time and adding value as a collective online reference resource rather than a set of individual titles. There is a definite synergy with e-learning. For libraries they require considerable staffing input but open up possibilities for dynamic and cost-effective collection management.*

Some surveys report on users’ experiences. For instance, at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore users were surveyed and it was found that they were most likely to use ebooks for technical and reference information (Anuradha and Usha, 2006). Appleton (2004) reports on the use of ebooks at Edge Hill College in Liverpool, UK by a group of midwifery students. The results were reported as being largely positive, especially for these health studies students who need to integrate their studies with clinical work and so access to ebooks was found to be very beneficial. On the library side it was found that ebook collections need to be promoted to particular user groups through targeted and structured strategies. Further experiences with the promotion and marketing of ebooks at this college is reported by Appleton (2005) in a special issue of *Electronic Library* dealing with ebooks. Also in that issue, McLuckie’s paper described experiences in integrating ebooks into the collection at Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) in Zurich (McLuckie,

2005). Figure 7 gives details of the ebooks, from a variety of publishers, in the subject area of Agriculture and Forestry.

Figure 7. Details of ebooks at ETH Library in Zurich



There was also a special issue of the journal *Against the Grain* on ebooks in 2005.

Also there have been some reports on the hardware and software used to access ebooks. Gunter (2005), of the School of Journalism at the University of Sheffield, found in a survey of 1,620 respondents who had used ebooks that the majority did so via reader software installed on a standard desktop PC and 9% had used some form of Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), 7% dedicated ebook readers and 3% palm-top devices. An overview of the ebook reader software is provided by Rao (2004).

A different type of study of ebooks is reported by Armstrong and Lonsdale (2005). Their research was investigating issues regarding the collection management

of ebooks in tertiary education libraries in the UK. The general conclusion reached was that, for the three disciplines studied (business and management; engineering; health and medicine): *undergraduate textbooks together with reference books would constitute primary purchasing areas*. There was also concern noted by participants in the focus groups involved in the study of the proliferation of licensing and costing models and it was proposed that a national model licence should be developed.

SOME MANAGEMENT ISSUES

There are very many issues to be considered by academic libraries related to the management of ebooks. One key issue is choosing which ebooks to acquire and from which supplier(s). Armstrong and Lonsdale (2005) reported that the three principal factors for librarians in selecting e-books are:

- course reading lists;
- high borrowing/use of existing pbooks;
- multiple copies of pbooks.

Gauld (2003) describes her experiences with the Cybrary at the University of Queensland in Australia and the use of ebooks from a variety of suppliers. Her advice is to choose a supplier based on :

- relevant content;
- licensing conditions;
- ownership of content;
- technical infrastructure;
- provision of statistics;
- functionality and user friendliness.

Some libraries form consortia to access ebooks as well as other electronic products.

For instance, the Korean Education Research and Information Service has formed a

consortium of over 70 university libraries to share access to 8,000 ebook titles from netLibrary. Other examples of consortia in the Asia Pacific region include the Taiwan Ebooks network (TEBNET) and the Shanghai Library consortium. Jianzhong (2004) describes the development of the hybrid library in Shanghai which provides access to some 30,000 ebooks in Chinese, as well as, via netLibrary, to 5,000 ebooks in English. In the UK the Northwest Academic Libraries (NoWAL) has negotiated a contract with netLibrary to provide access to some 12,000 ebook priced titles, as well as 3,800 freely available titles for its consortium of 13 academic libraries in the North West of England (Harris, 2004).

Deciding how users should be informed about the ebooks which a library has acquired is a major management issue. Many libraries provide some link via the main portal, or library homepage, as exemplified in Figure 8, from the JRD Tata Memorial Library at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore (<http://www.library.iisc.ernet.in/>).

Figure 8. Home page of the JRD Tata Memorial Library with links to ebooks



Some libraries list all the ebook titles available and some, such as at the Open University in Hong Kong (OUHK), provide links to lists in particular subjects areas. The library OUHK (<http://www.lib.ouhk.edu.hk/>) provides access to 3,300 ebooks, 95% of which are in Chinese and Figure 9 shows how links can be made to ebooks in either English (from netLibrary) or Chinese on the subject of China/International Studies.

Figure 9. Browsing for ebooks at the Open University of Hong Kong

The screenshot shows the 'ELECTRONIC Library' interface of The Open University of Hong Kong. The page is titled 'Browse : Subjects : China / International Studies'. A 'Show All' button is visible. Below this, a table lists characters and stroke counts for browsing titles.

A	H	O	V	一劃	八劃	十五劃
B	I	P	W	二劃	九劃	十六劃
C	J	Q	X	三劃	十劃	十七劃
D	K	R	Y	四劃	十一劃	十八劃
E	L	S	Z	五劃	十二劃	十九劃
F	M	T	Others	六劃	十三劃	二十劃
G	N	U	其他	七劃	十四劃	廿劃以上

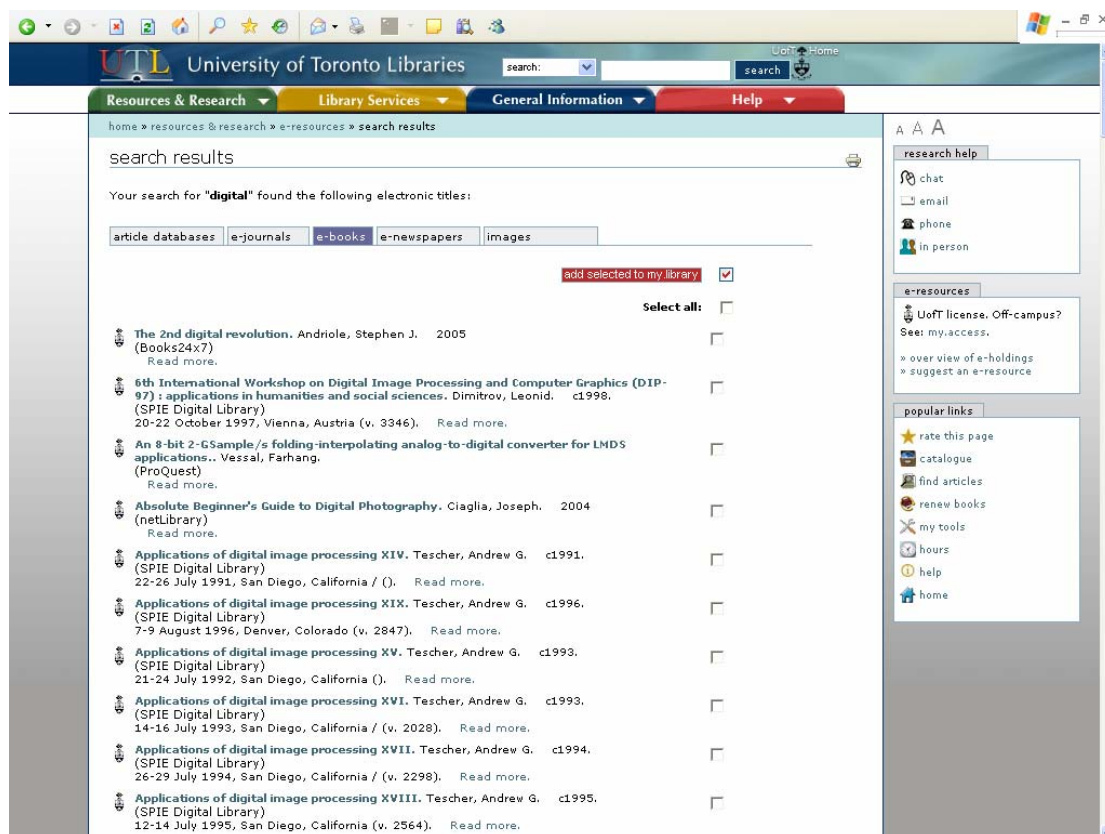
Please click on the alphabet / stroke to view the listing of relevant records. Here English / Chinese records are arranged alphabetically or according to the number of strokes of the 1st character of their titles. Records with titles that cannot be grouped alphabetically or according to the stroke number can be found under Others (English) or 其他 (Chinese). You can also view a complete listing of all the titles under this subject by clicking "Show All".

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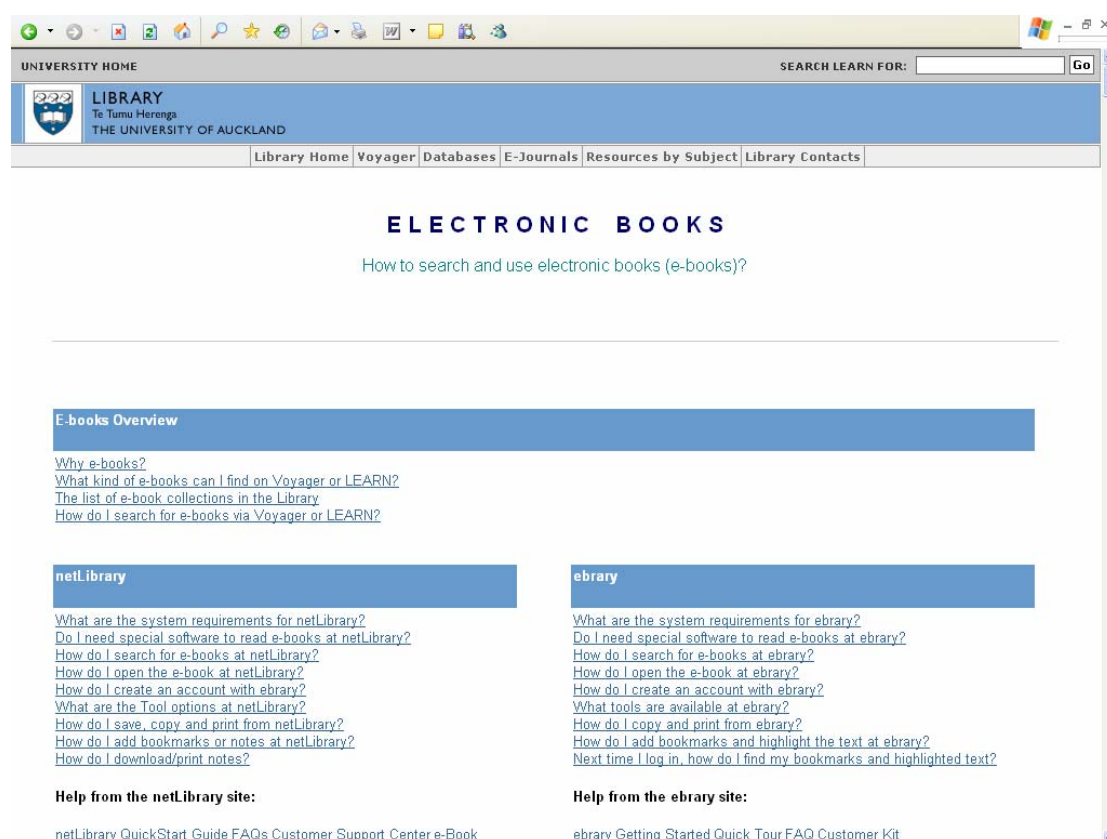
At the University of Toronto Libraries in Canada (<http://main.library.utoronto.ca/>) users can search across all ebook collections for titles on a given topic as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. List of ebook titles containing the term 'digital' at the University of Toronto



Promotion of ebooks by library staff to the academic colleagues and to students is important as well as providing documentation about their use. Figure 11 shows a page showing questions relating on how to search and use ebooks from the Library at the University of Auckland in New Zealand (<http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/>) which provides access to about 180,000 ebooks.

Figure 11 Information on searching and using ebooks at the University of Auckland



The advantage that ebooks provide in the area of dynamic collection management results in the need to monitor usage of ebooks and being able to react accordingly. The various ebook suppliers have different ways of recording the statistics of use – and this too can provide a challenge in managing ebook collections. The need for LIS staff to keep up to date on ebook developments was noted earlier. A list of writings about ebooks is maintained by Armstrong and Lonsdale on their company (Information Automation Ltd)'s website (http://www.i-a-l.co.uk/resource_ebook2005.html) and they are also writing a book on ebooks (Armstrong and Lonsdale, 2006). A specialist mailing list (lis-e-lib) from the UK's JISCmail service (<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk>) has been in existence since 2001 for library staff to exchange experiences or ask for advice on matters related to ebooks. For instance, on the day that this was being written a request was posted from an

overseas colleague who wished information on what it might cost to have a licence for many users to access one ebook over a three year period. The prompt response from a UK librarian indicated that the pricing was often linked to factors including the number of concurrent users, whether access was required from remote sites or not, whether it was an annual subscription to the ebook (which would provide updates) or an outright purchase, and the number of full-time staff at the institution.

EBOOKS AND JISC IN THE UK

The JISC in the UK is nationally funded and supports further and higher education by providing strategic guidance, advice and opportunities in the use of ICT to support teaching, learning, research and administration. In recognition of the potential of ebooks in this area the JISC commissioned a study on the provision of electronic academic monographs and textbooks in the late 1990s (Armstrong and Lonsdale, 1998). This led to the establishment of the eBooks Working Group charged with the mission to :

provide advice on collecting priorities and development priorities for e-books through a process which identifies and responds to user needs and supports the execution of the JISC Strategic Framework

(http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=wg_ebooks_home)

The core aims of this group are to:

- provide leadership in establishing a strategy for ebook development;
- secure access to a critical mass of electronic general reference books
- negotiate and facilitate the provision of other ebooks;
- explore issues for supporting UK academics in authoring ebooks;

- develop national activities that complement current book procurement;
- build positive and inclusive relationships with all major stakeholders.

In order to assist in its work the group commissioned a series of four studies in 2002 and 2003. The first was an ebook mapping exercise (Armstrong and Lonsdale, 2003).

The keypoints found from this study were:

- Online delivery of e-books in PDF is preferred.
- Undergraduate textbooks and reference material should be the primary purchasing areas.
- There is concern about collection development issues, including lack of bibliographic control.
- Academic staff need to be aware of ebook developments.
- There is a proliferation of licensing and costing models.

The second study was on promoting the uptake of ebooks in UK academic libraries and was carried out by the Gold Leaf consultancy (Bennett, 2003; Bennett and Landoni, 2005). The main findings from this study were that:

- Academics need to include ebooks on reading lists.
- LIS staff should include ebooks in catalogues.
- The variety of software and hardware is a barrier to promotion of use of ebooks.
- The range of charging mechanisms and access conditions is also a barrier to use.

- Some academics are using e-books in innovative ways and their ideas should be disseminated.

Education for Change Ltd and the University of Stirling were commissioned to undertake a study to define the business and market context for electronic textbooks within the UK (Education for Change and Stirling University, 2003). Results from this study showed that:

- The ebook industry is currently dominated by the ‘big players’ of print, although others are beginning to appear including VLE vendors, broadcasters, and digitisation/conversion companies.
- Academics need to be aware of ebook offerings.
- The requirements of Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA) in the UK may provide a spur for developments for electronic textbooks.
- There is a need for appropriate metadata tagging.
- There is a need for standards for the mark-up of ‘chunks’ of material from an ebook that might be used in an e-learning environment.

The final of these four studies was undertaken by staff from the Arts and Humanities Data Service for Literature, Language and Linguistics based at the OTA in Oxford and investigated the use of free ebooks in UK academic libraries (Bergland et al., 2004). The findings from this study showed that:

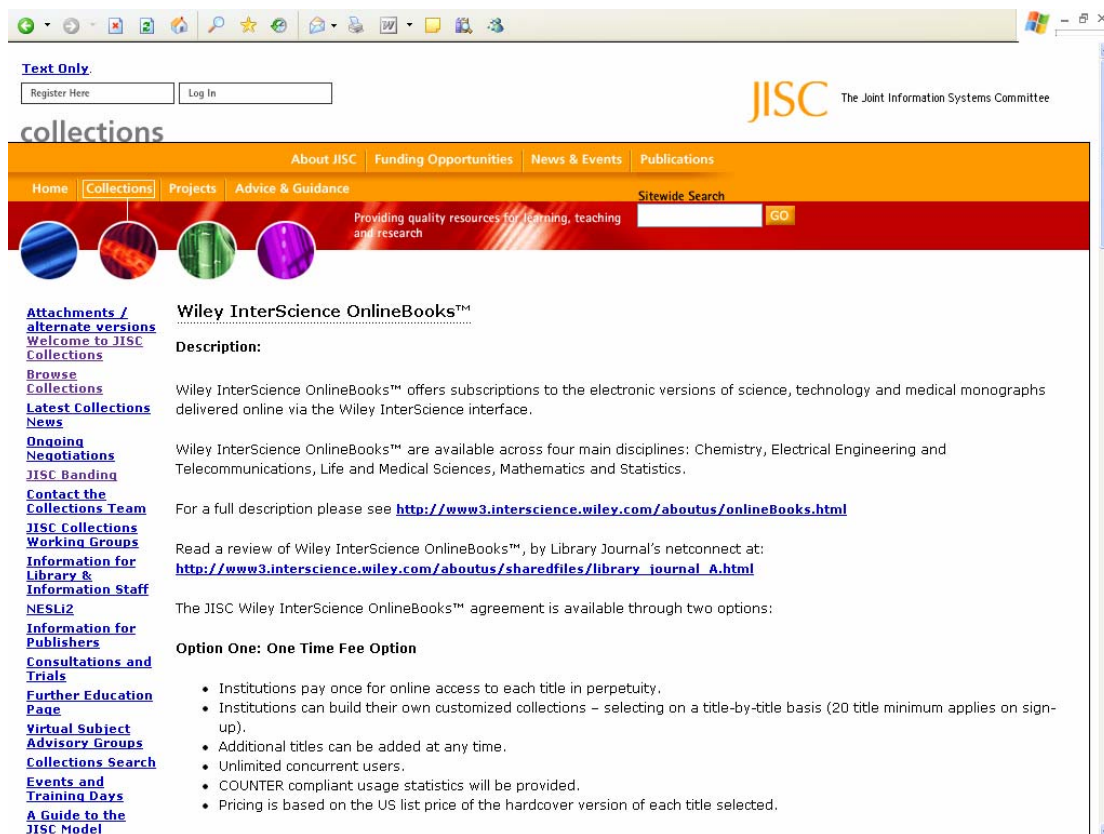
- There is a lack of availability of a complete range of titles of the free ebooks.
- Many have doubts about quality assurance of the free ebooks.
- There is a lack of confidence in the persistence of free ebook sources.

- The costs in creating appropriate metadata can be great.
- The design of some ebooks is poor.
- Free ebooks are probably more important for use in the humanities than in other disciplines.
- VLEs provide an opportunity for free ebooks.

The eBooks Working Group continues to progress negotiations regarding a model licence within the UK for the use of ebooks and acts as a centre of information on developments in the use of ebooks in UK academic libraries. As indicated earlier JISC has also negotiated deals with various ebook suppliers as part of its Collection strategy to provide sources “*which are intended to enrich teaching, learning and research in UK further and higher education*” .

(<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=coll>). A large number of electronic information sources are available, including some ebooks. Figure 12 provides some of the details, taken from the JISC website of the deal for Wiley InterScience Onlinebooks (http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=coll_wiley_ebooks&src=alpha)

Figure 12. Part of information on Wiley InterScience OnlineBooks from the JISC website



CONCLUSIONS

This paper has provided a brief overview of some of the developments related to ebooks in academic libraries in different parts of the world. Many of the issues discussed are universal and affect users and staff in academic libraries in similar ways. It would appear from all the developments and interest related to ebooks during 2004 and 2005 from all the stakeholders (i.e. users, libraries, publishers and aggregators) that use of ebooks is likely to grow within academic libraries worldwide.

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